

MATHER COMMUNITY CENTER OPERATING COST ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

- Head Count – Unchanged
- Maintenance/Utility Expenses – Comparable to present
- Revenue generating opportunities

A discussion of the operating expenses for the Mather Center needs to start with an acknowledgement of how the Senior Center is budgeted at present. It is not set up as an enterprise fund. Revenue generated by the Center through program fees, rent, and meals goes into the Town's General Fund which supports all Town operations and is not individually segregated back to the Senior Center (or Community Center).

Additionally, there needs to be a certain level of understanding as to how services are delivered at present. A number of operating cost questions that have been posed of late suggest that there is an incomplete appreciation for how the current facility operates.

In narrative fashion below, the aspects of operations of the Mather Center are outlined below with cost centers for the Senior Center and Community Center operation described. A spreadsheet analysis is somewhat difficult to complete as policy direction needs to be provided by the Board of Selectmen as it relates to revenue potential and access to the building. Absent such direction, an abstract analysis is the best that can be delivered at this time.

SENIOR ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Head Count:

Staff at the current Senior Center is made up of 6 non-union employees working a combination of full- and part-time hours which includes the Center Coordinator, Program Assistant, Clerk, Chef, and Building Attendant. The paid staff is supplemented by an active corps of 16 volunteers involved in operations of the facility including serving as greeters, lunch servers, librarians, event assistants, and gift shop managers.

Core operations at the Mather Center are not envisioned to change too dramatically necessitating changes in head count. The Strategic Plan developed for the Center identified an opportunity to grow the volunteer corps with a new facility as more seniors were engaged and involved along with the opportunity to reach more active seniors.

Paid staff changes likely would be changed as discussed below under Maintenance. The only anticipated growth in personnel costs at this time is a function of salary adjustments and benefit costs. **Total head count would be unchanged.**

Café:

The proposed Mather Center includes a Café as a separate area to support socialization and informal/unstructured discussions between participating seniors. A similar function currently exists at Edgerton.

Donated donuts are made available to seniors with coffee at the beginning of each day in one corner of the large meeting/dining room. The Chef is in the facility when the donuts are on offer. This amenity functions effectively based on the honor system.

It is envisioned that the Café would be handled much the same way with donated donuts offered and handled by the Chef. It is conceivable that a volunteer could aid in this function, but it can operate with existing staff. Therefore, **there is no anticipated increase in operating expense at this time for the Café.**

Gift Shop:

The proposed Mather Center provides for a “Gift Shop” for the Senior Center. This is not a program enhancement. The current facility has a room dedicated to the sale of craft good made by the seniors. The proceeds from the shop are used to support senior activities. The Mather Center provides for display cabinets rather than a dedicated room.

The Gift Shop is currently supported by two volunteer managers. It is assumed that this activity will continue to be led by dedicated volunteers – as is the norm in Senior Centers across the State. As such, **this activity has no impact on the operating expenses of the Center.**

Dining Room/Lunch:

The lunch meal offered to seniors for \$4 per person/day would be maintained in the Mather Center. **This service is entirely self-supporting and would not result in an increased operating expense. Revenue generating potential was identified earlier** in the Strategic Plan developed for the Center, by charging a different rate for non-residents and offering a different option than the large meal which forms the core of this aspect of the Senior Center.

Fitness Room:

The Fitness room in the proposed Mather Center introduces a new level of service to the Center, but is in keeping with the long-standing use of the Hollow Tree School gym for physical fitness. A general fitness space will exist which will serve double duty as a location for the Darien Arts Center’s dance program (which currently take place 6 days per week at Edgerton for a rental fee). The resulting new element is the availability of fitness equipment.

The fitness equipment represents an **opportunity for revenue generation.** Access to the room can be automated/computerized. Other communities have a similar amenity which is accessed through a swipe card which is paid for through a membership fee (annual or monthly). Senior attendees are usually trained on the equipment, provide a medical release and sign a liability waiver. Training can take place via a regular program hiring a contractor which would be covered by the membership fee. The maintenance needs of the equipment likewise would be addressed through the **membership fee.**

Maintenance:

Facility maintenance at the Edgerton site is handled through a contractor who cleans the facility on a daily basis and a part-time employee available during part of the daily operation to address immediate issues. Other facility needs are addressed through the deployment of existing Parks & Recreation/Public Works crews or the hiring of contractors to make facility repairs.

Moving to the proposed Mather Center would present an opportunity to change operations. In theory, the budget would **no longer need to carry as large an amount for operating and capital funds for facility repairs** as the functionally obsolete building would go off-line.

It should also be noted that the budget **carries \$8,600 in regular maintenance costs directly tied to the current state of the building**. The Public Works Department budget also carries costs attributable to building system failures which fluctuates annually. These costs should be eliminated as deferred maintenance would end

With access to the custodians in the Town Hall, the building does not need to contract cleaning services. As such, this cost and future escalation would be eliminated, but coupled with the existing part-time custodian salary to have a custodian available in the Center for its hours of operation to support the use of the space. The existing custodial staff can open and close the Town Hall Annex area much as it is done now for the main part of the Town Hall without increasing operating costs.

	FY2011-12	FY2012-13	FY2013-14	FY2014-15
Full-Time Salary*	42,452	43,301	44,167	45,050
Part-Time Salary	23,198	23,747	24,340	24,949
Facility Maintenance	24,060	24,782	25,526	26,292
<i>Subtotal</i>	47,258	48,529	49,866	51,241
Difference	4,806	5,228	5,699	6,191

*The union contract for this position is not settled and future wages are not set.

As a result, the **personnel aspect of facility maintenance is effectively cost neutral and service quality is enhanced through the co-location of the Mather Center at Town Hall**.

Utilities:

The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance provided the funding to connect the Town Hall to natural gas. This change will have an impact on the entire Town's operations and not just the use for the Mather Center. As a result, the savings to be seen from this decision will be seen in other areas of the Town's budget too.

Additionally, the capital investments of the project should improve the overall efficiency of the Annex space with improved glazing in specific locations, and more energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems.

Coupled with a lower cost fuel, **the utility expense for the Mather Center should compare favorably to the Edgerton facility's inefficient systems, expensive fuel and leaky building envelope.**

Programs:

Funding has always been provided to support programs at the Senior Center. In some cases, a fee is charged for attendance/participation in a program. Absent a new policy direction for programming, **the current budget should be sufficient to carry programs forward.** In many cases the current Center Coordinator has been able to deliver program offerings at no cost to the Town. It is assumed that the combination of no-charge presenters and fee-for-service presenters would form the program offerings at the Center.

It must also be noted for those unfamiliar with the operations of the Center, at present 35 volunteers lead programs or are unpaid instructors. This **volunteer base in an integral part to how the Center operates now and it is assumed that it will be into the future.**

Again, as noted in the strategic plan for the Center, it was envisioned that a new space would present a **revenue generating opportunity** by charging a different price for non-resident participate compared to resident seniors. Policy direction from the Board of Selectmen would be required to implement the change.

MATHER CENTER USE AS COMMUNITY CENTER

Non-Senior Center program hours present an opportunity to utilize the space for a community purpose and to provide for new venues for Parks & Recreation programs. The Darien Arts Center is a natural community user of the space given the proximity of their fine arts space already leased in Town Hall and that the new space would need to accommodate their dance program.

Less frequently identified is the potential for Parks & Recreation to expand its program offerings in the building. Parks & Recreation has not been able to grow to accommodate public demand due to a lack of space. A lack of space or use of inappropriate space has limited program offerings.

Head Count:

No added head count is assumed to be necessary for the Mather Center when programming shifts from Senior Center operations to a Community Center use. No Town staff are present to support the Darien Arts Center during its use of the current facility at Edgerton.

The booking of spaces in Town Hall is handled through Parks & Recreation Department staff. This practice would continue as it relates to the scheduling and reserving of space in the Mather Center. With the connection to Town Hall, the custodial support staff that maintain and monitor the Town Hall would be available to address the space in the Annex (which is currently not done).

New programs offered through the Parks & Recreation Department which could come on line would be self-supporting. All program fee revenue would cover the cost of offering the program and any instruction – as is the current practice.

Fitness Room:

As noted above, a portion of the fitness room would be available to maintain the dance space provided to the Darien Arts Center at the Edgerton facility. A rental fee is charged the Arts Center for space. The amount of that fee or any change in the amount is within the purview of the Board of Selectmen.

The portion of the fitness room with exercise equipment would work in a similar fashion as described above.

October 13, 2011

Comparison of Operating Expenses

ACTUAL FY10-11

	35 Leroy	BOE
	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>Central Office</u>
Utilities	\$49,180	\$48,923
Maintenance	\$12,450	unknown ***
TOTAL	\$61,630	\$48,923
		\$135,023

FORECAST

	Mather	BOE
	<u>Center *</u>	<u>Central Office**</u>
Utilities	\$61,525	\$46,742
Maintenance	\$7,430	unknown***
TOTAL	\$68,955	\$46,742
		\$115,697

Forecast Operating Savings \$19,326

- * Reduced Maintenance expenses with capital improvements and newer systems. Natural gas assumed as heating fuel for Annex.
 ** Utilities extrapolated from last year of Library operations, adjusted for current commodity costs and reduced hours of operations.
 *** It is assumed that the BOE has some basic maintenance expense for its office space.

October 12, 2011